



NR-15-47

News Release

August 6, 2015

USDA to Study Crop Production Practices

A sample of soybean and oat growers across Michigan will soon be contacted by the USDA, NASS, Great Lakes Region to participate in Phase II of the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS).

Conducted annually in the fall and winter, ARMS is USDA's primary source of information on the production practices, resource use and economic well-being of America's farm households. The information from ARMS provides important links between what farmers produce, how they produce it, and the financial state of their operation.

NASS will conduct personal interviews with over 11,000 farm operators nationwide, including 350 in Michigan. They will be asked to provide information on their fertilizer, nutrient and pesticide applications, as well as their pest management and irrigation practices.

"This is the second phase of ARMS, where we focus on production practices and costs. This year, we are looking at soybeans and oats," said Ty Kalaus, acting Director of the Michigan Field Office. "During the third phase of the survey, in early 2016, we will follow up with some producers to obtain additional economic data."

While ARMS is a lengthy and complex survey, its importance cannot be underestimated, according to Kalaus. "Virtually every federal farm program and policy is based on ARMS data," he said. "Conservation programs, price support programs, risk management programs, research programs – you name it. All of them rely on information generated through this survey. That's why it's so important that farmers take the time to participate and ensure that we have the most accurate and up-to-date information, straight from the source."

Kalaus assures ARMS participants that the confidentiality of their responses is protected by law. "NASS strictly safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only state- and national-level data, ensuring that no individual producer or operation can be identified," he said.

For more information about ARMS and other surveys conducted by NASS, contact the Michigan Field Office at 1-800-453-7501 or visit the NASS web site at: www.nass.usda.gov.

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